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50 TIPS & TRICKS

The more you use FCP the more shortcuts and handy hints you'll find - but that could take some time... **Darren Mostyn** shares 50 top tips and tricks for using all the programs in the Final Cut Studio suite.



Anyone who has worked on a variety of editing systems over the years will tell you that keeping the same shortcuts is very important

in terms of workflow. You soon learn to become extremely quick, and by learning faster and smarter ways of doing simple, everyday tasks you leave more time for productivity and creativity, which is what really matters. Despite that, it's almost a certainty that even after years of working on a system, just when you think you've mastered all the shortcuts and workarounds, someone shows you an easier way of doing something. Or perhaps you've been under the impression that a certain procedure just isn't possible - only to discover that it most certainly is.

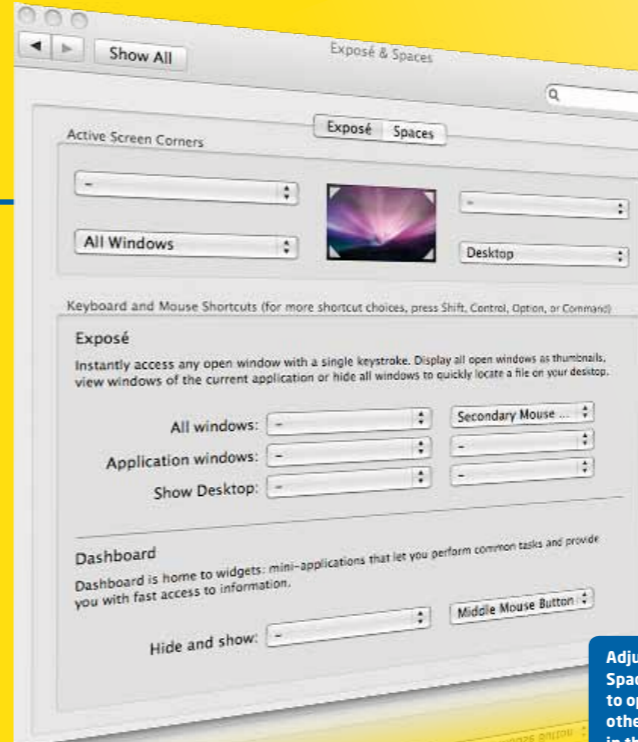
Ironically, one of the best ways to pick up new workflow ideas that might not have

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occurred to you is by training someone else. No two editors work in the same way or use the system in the same way, and you will often find that while teaching people how to get the most out of their edit suite you pick up a few new methods along the way.

Here, then, is a collection of some of those finest 'I didn't know you could do that' moments gleaned through hard experience, combined with a few essential basics to help you get the most out of Final Cut Pro and its associated programs.

Some of the tips described here are just for simple tasks, but many of them will save you valuable time in the edit suite. **lvf**



Adjust the Exposé and Space settings of Mac OS to optimise them for FCP, otherwise they may well get in the way.

01 One of the very first things you will need to do when starting for the first time on Final Cut Pro is to override the Exposé default settings on the operating system. Once you are comfortable with FCP you will use the keyboard more and more. Exposé uses [F9], [F10] and [F11], which are important keys in FCP editing. To alleviate this annoyance you will need to either disable the Exposé-assigned keys or re-assign them. In System Preferences select Exposé and Spaces. You could reassign the defaults to use active corners instead of the Function keys, so bottom right is Show Desktop (previously [F11]) and bottom left is All Windows (previously [F9]). Change the [F10] and [F12] keys to be inactive for Exposé, leaving them free for use in FCP. By leaving the timeline away from the very bottom edges of my screen you don't accidentally activate the Exposé areas when working on edits. So now, to see the Desktop, simply move the mouse/pen to the bottom right corner of the screen.

02 FCP defaults to opening the last project you were working on when you launch the software. If this project is large it can take a while to open. If you would rather start with a blank new project but wish to keep the default setting you can simply press the [Shift] key when launching FCP. Pressing [Alt] and launching FCP will open the last project you were working on but it won't load any of the sequences into the timeline, thereby saving time on loading for projects with many sequences.

03 If you have a decent-size monitor - and particularly if you have dual monitors - stop straining your eyes. Go to Final Cut Pro>User Preferences and change the default browser text size from small to medium.

04 Copying timecode values can easily be achieved by holding down the [Alt] key and then drag-and-dropping the timecode or duration field to another field. This saves you having to type in values and is especially useful when batch digitising. You can copy comments to other fields in the same way.



Right-click a list to display a list of previous text entries for each column, enabling quick access to your commonly-typed data.

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05 You can recall a list of previous words used for descriptions by right-clicking in the relevant field. For example, you may have a list of names that need assigning to many clips; simply right-click in the field and a list of previous names will appear. This works for reel names, too. You can also adapt the labels list in your User Preferences to give even more flexibility; for example, use red to denote Master Sequence to avoid the nightmare of naming your sequence something like 'Final Master this is the actual one honest Version 2a'. The master comment columns can actually be renamed in Edit>Project Properties, giving you even more user-friendly organising. By using the colour labels on a sequence it becomes instantly recognisable when you have multiple sequences open as its tab will be coloured in the canvas and timeline. By simply dragging and dropping, you can easily re-order the sequence tabs.

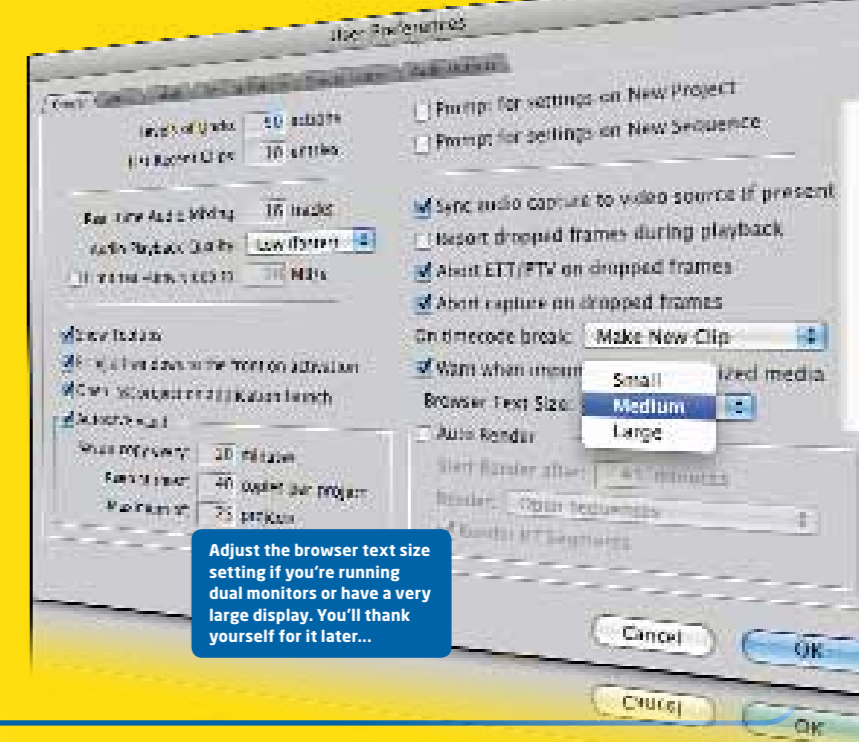
06 You can open and close bins in the browser using the left and right arrow keys on your keyboard. (Up and down arrows will move up and down through your different bins.)

07 There are so many keyboard shortcuts in FCP that you will never remember them all. Here is a list of the most commonly used ones: [Q] toggles between the Viewer and Canvas.

08 [I] = Mark In, [Shift]+[I] is go to Mark In (remember as 'Shift to the in point'), [Alt]+[I] is clear the In point. Replacing [I] with [O] does the Out point. [Alt]+[X] deletes both In and Out in one keystroke.

09 [Alt]+[R] renders all video and audio effects. [Cmd]+[R] renders just a section.

10 [Shift]+down arrow and [Shift]+up go to next and previous markers respectively.



Adjust the browser text size setting if you're running dual monitors or have a very large display. You'll thank yourself for it later...